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Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF JOHN COLET UPON ERASMUS

by

Charlotte Barton Mc Cracken

(B.S. in R.E.,Boston University, 1930)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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INTRODUCTION

The Problem. The problem of this study is to trace the influence of John Colet upon Desiderius Erasmus. The thesis itself suggests this purpose.

The Method. The method to be pursued is that of viewing the life of each man up to the time of their meeting, of surveying their friendship, and finally, of suggesting certain lines of influence radiating from Colet to Erasmus. It is felt that in this way we may gain a clear vision of the two men, their characteristics and purposes, and thus be better able to draw conclusions.

Necessary Presuppositions. In such a study, several presuppositions are necessary. First, the literature in such a study is so large that much must be omitted. Erasmian literature is vast. Biographies, studies of particular natures, interpretations of writings, are available for study. Nor does Colet lack for literary background. Out of this vast amount of literature, it has been necessary to choose only that directly pertaining to the problem in view. It is admitted that Erasmus influenced Colet as well as Colet influencing Erasmus; it is admitted that Erasmus' genius is a matter of question to some scholars and would prove a fascinating study; it is admitted that his position

during the Reformation period is of valuable interest - but all of these roads must be closed as we center our attention on the one goal in view - did John Colet influence Erasmus? Second, the tracing of influences may never be absolute but must be merely suggestive. The tracing of the influence of one personality upon another personality is difficult for a great deal lies beneath the conscicusness of either person. Any conclusions made in this study are made to point the way, not to close the problem entirely.

Defense of the Problem. It is possible to offer statements from authorities in Erasmian writing in proof of the thesis - that John Colet influenced Erasmus.

The outstanding exponent of this problem, although he does so more from the side of Colet than of Eramus', is Frederic Seebohm in his book The Oxford Reformers. His purpose is to show that John Colet, Erasmus, and Thomas More were co-workers in the new movement in England in the sixteenth century. He consistently upholds his belief that Erasmus, because of Colet's influence, followed in his footsteps and thus spread Colet's spirit throughout the world.

Williston Walker, the church historian, says "In 1499 in England, Erasmus made the helpful friendship of John

Colet who directed him toward the study of the Bible and the Fathers;"[1] while another historian, Thomas M. Lindsay, makes the statement: "The Dean of St. Paul's made Erasmus the decidedly Christian Humanist he became, and impressed on him that conception of a reformation which, leaving external things very much as they were, undertook a renovation of morals. He never lost the impress of Colet's stamp."[2]

A Dutchman, in writing of Erasmus, states: "It was Colet's word and example which first changed Erasmus' desultory occupation with theological studies into a firm and lasting resolve to make their pursuit the object of his life."[3]

Drummond, one of the earlier biographers of Erasmus states that if Erasmus had gained nothing by his visit to England except the friendship of a man like Colet his journey would have been worth while.[4]

Finally, we quote Preserved Smith: "The influence on Erasmus of this stimulating personality was as immediate as it was profound. The sketch of Colet's life, written many years afterward, rightly mentions some of the points which particularly impressed him; Colet's love of primitive texts, and dislike for the later dogmaticians, Scotus, Aquinas, and even Augustine;

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1 Walker, Williston The History of the Christian Church, p. 329
2 Lindsay, T. M. The History of the Reformation, Vol.I, p. 178
3 Huizinga, J. Erasmus, p. 13
4 Drummond, R. B. Erasmus, p. 96

his criticism of the monastic life."[1]

Having suggested defense of our thesis by quoting from authoritative biographers of Erasmus, let us hasten to our survey.

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1 Smith, Preserved Erasmus, p. 96.

CHAPTER I.

EUROPE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Introduction The world into which Colet and Erasmus were born was one of constant flux and change. Commerce was being revolutionized by the discovery of new land and water routes. Nations warred upon each other in search of new lands for conquest. Economic changes were numerous. Man turned his gaze inward and realized his own worth. He sought the annals of the past to find the opinions of other men who, like himself, were curious about present life. The church, the stabilizer of men and nations for some centuries, was losing its hold upon the world. Everywhere there was unrest. A new creative energy had permeated every department of man's life. Progress comes gradually. Although no change had its origin and culmination in the fifteenth century alone, yet the century saw the climax of many changes and became the birthplace of others.

What an age in which to live! - one hundred years after Petrarch and Boccaccio, the fathers of the new learning; one hundred years after the reform of Wyclif in England; fifty years after the burning of John Hus; fifty years after the close of the schism in the Roman Catholic Papacy. Yet what events lay ahead! - the discovery of new continents and waterways; the close of the Medici glory in Florence; the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII; the spreading of the new learning throughout the

known world; the breakdown of the last stronghold of the Moors in Spain.

The years between 1450-1500 were eventful ones. Even we, with five centuries between us, gaze with wonder on the rapidity of the movement of the fifteenth century. How much more must they, who lived through this chaos, have been bewildered. Yet it is always so. We do not realize, as we live through our own age, that we too, are making history. Neither did the people of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Perhaps, the very fact of their not realizing was their salvation.

"There are periods in history when vast changes are consummated in a relatively short time, after perhaps centuries of apparent stability, and the sixteenth century was preeminently such a time."[1] This new spirit of inquiry and change which we term "The Renaissance" was not a sudden movement as we sometimes suppose. It did not shoot rocket-like from the leaden skies, but emerged gradually from the struggles of the Middle Ages. There can never be a sharp line of demarcation in historical movements, for one century arises from another, one movement emerges from the last. The origin of this so-called Renaissance period must always be a source of mystery. Whatever be its origin, the spirit of curiosity energized the fifteenth

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1 Wilkinson, Maurice Erasmus of Rotterdam, p. 26.

and sixteenth centuries.

It is not our purpose to view the Renaissance era in great detail, but it is necessary to survey certain phases of the period in order to interpret better the men of our study. In a few broad strokes, the world into which Colet and Erasmus were born may be sketched.

The People: To the people of the fifteenth century, the world was the center of the universe; stars and sun moved around it. Men knew not whether the earth was round or flat. He knew only that, for him, the earth was the nucleus of all life. The Church had tried to teach him that the world beyond was the only worth-while one, but with the opening of the Renaissance era and its spirit of criticism, man felt the present world to be the center of life.

The people were superstitious. Devils were ever present beings; sudden death descending upon the wicked was a sign of heavenly judgment. Dragons, elves, fairies, pixies - all were seen in woodland or open country. Miracles were every day experiences. Crosses suddenly appeared on clothing or on buildings. The stars guided and controlled the destiny of man. The sudden appearance of a comet in the sky was cause for alarm and spelled disaster to follow. Even the world of

medicine was pervaded with magical devices. Stories of these "unearthly" experiences passed by word of mouth until they grew out of all proportion to the original experience. "In consequence, men had not learnt to doubt the evidence of their senses and to regard things as too strange to be true. It was felt that anything might happen, and as a result almost everything did happen."[1]

The position of the people was changing with the downfall of the feudal system. Peasants were claiming their separation from their lords. The growth of the crown, the growth of commerce, and the restlessness of the people caused the breaking of the feudal system of lord and vassal. With the discovery of new routes over land and water, great commercial towns had risen into prominence. Trade shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic causing the rapid growth of London, Antwerp, and Amsterdam. With the rise of commerce in foreign lands, there came the merchant class gathering in the towns over Europe. Foreign trade contributed to the downfall of the guild system and to the birth of capitalism. Peasants, merchants, nobility - all were imbued with the spirit of individualism.

The fifteenth century had brought an alteration in the mental outlook of the people. During the first half of the century, all eyes were turned upon Italy as the center of

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1 Allen, P. S. The Age of Erasmus, p. 212.

a new spirit of learning. The Italian people seem to have been naturally fitted, by termperament and customs, for the sudden revival of classical learning that swept the country in the late fourteenth century. "Antiquity" became the by-word of Italy. The men of Florence, Venice, and Rome looked to the past because it gave expression to the feelings that grew spontaneously from within themselves. The names of Pico, Ficino, Poliziano were synonyms for classical learning. Scholars from all lands went to Italy to kneel at the shrine of learning. They brought back to their own countries ideas of criticism and of inquiry that startled the thoughts of their fellow men. Thus, all classes of people felt the influence of the Renaissance mood.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the period was the rise of individualism. It was not a new idea but was an outgrowth of preceding centuries. In Italy, in the late fourteenth century, this spirit of individualism was revived, and showed itself in great works of art, architecture, and literature. It brought about the criticism of outward authority and stimulated men to ask questions about all of life.

Discovery was the key-word of the age. Scholars, merchants, sailors, and peasants were enthused with the spirit of new conquests. For years the men of Italy had been recovering

old manuscripts and searching the archives of ancient days. The germ of discovery was carried to other countries and led, eventually, to the finding of new continents and sea-paths. The invention of paper, of glass, of gunpowder, but, above all, of the printing press, were the important events of the era. No other invention for centuries before or after had such a momentous effect as the invention of a printing press with movable type. It matters not where the idea originated, nor what city claimed the first press. The invention of printing "rent the veil of the temple of religion and knowledge."[1] Hitherto, man could influence the actions of only a few of his fellow men; but now when books could be multiplied a thousandfold, he could gain the attention of thousands. The public became the supreme court of the world for now the people themselves might read of important events and discoveries of the age. There had been, it is true, manuscripts and books before the fifteenth century, but not until the invention of the printing press was reading material available to all. "As the Renaissance was an intense curiosity to know and to learn, so the printing press was the answer to that inquiring spirit; and, as the history of the race in the past forms its judgments for the future, so the ideas which actuated the race in the past

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1 Smith, Preserved The Age of the Reformation, p. 10.
2 Ibid, p. 10

must influence the ideas of the times to come."[1]

The Church. The Church still held sway over the people of the fifteenth century. Only the Church could marry, baptize, or bury. When a child was born, he was immediately a member of the Catholic Church. Everywhere, the Church was the final judge.

The Church had suffered from schism during the "captivity of the papacy" (1309-77). In the fifteenth century, it was more interested in acquring temporal power. Through Renaissance influence, the papacy had become more worldly minded. "Their chief concern was to consolidate their Italian states, to multiply the financial burden of the Church in order to acquire money to maintain a glorious court, to build papaces and churches and exercise a munificent patronage of scholars."[2] With the ascendance of Nicholas V (1447-1455) upon the papal throne, there began a series of "Renaissance Popes" who were more interested in the kingdom of man than in the kingdom of God. Their motto appeared to be that of Leo X to "enjoy the papacy". Nicholas V, Alexander VI, and Leo X are famous and infamous names during the century; famous for their patronage of learning and art; infamous for their neglect of ecclesiastical affairs. It was difficult to distinguish between the moral life of a Pope and the

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1 Mangan, J. J. Life, Character, and Influence of Erasmus, I, p. 89
2 Schevill, F. A History of Europe, p. 69.

moral life of the worst tyrant of the land. When the time of the papal monarchs was not spent in collecting libraries, fanning the flame of art, superintending the building of their own tombs, it was spent in leading armies or planning battles to bring all of Europe under their absolute power.

Moreover, not only the hierarchy of the Church but the clergy themselves were, in many lands, leading dissolute and abandoned lives. Simony was prevalent and church offices were bought and sold. Benefices were granted to friends of the clergy whether or not they lived near the charge.

The darker pages of the Church's history during the Renaissance period do not tell the whole story. There were individual clergy who were beloved by all, living splendid lives. There were monastic reformers who cried out against the abuses of the Church. Such a one was Savonarola of Florence. Groups inside and outside of the Church had striven for reformation but had not succeeded. There was not a thinking person in the fifteenth century who did not realize the need for reform within the Church.

The State The condition of "the State" in 1450 was one of unrest and warfare. Nations had arisen and were quarreling for power. Nationalism, dormant in the Middle Ages, was again reviving in greater strength than before. "Two things produce a nation - a rich inheritance of memories and the desire to preserve those memories."[1] Through the struggles of the early fifteenth century, nations had gained those memories. France had gained a sense of unity in its struggle withEngland. Louis XI, who ascended the throne in 1461, further united the kingdom by warfare and annexation until it was one of the first powers of the world. England, under the reign of Henry VII gained strength and unity. Already, the spirit of loyalty to the crown was stronger in England than in any other nation. In Spain, unity had been gained through the marriage of Ferdinand of Castile and Isabelle of Arragon. The driving of the Moors out of Spain, together with the discoveries of new continents in the latter part of the century, made Spain the leader of the world. Ferdinand, also, contracted marriages for his children with England and Germany. Italy, never a united nation, was torn between France, Spain, and the Papacy. In 1493, Maximilian I came to the throne of Germany and devoted his energy to the extension of the boundaries of the empire and

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1 Hulme, E. M. The Renaissance, p. 52.

the furtherance of the Hapsburg House.

As nations fought for supremacy, new problems of adjustment arose. It was the beginning of the policy of the "balance of power"; of international treaties and diplomacy; in short, the birth of modern international politics. Through this national struggle ran the thread of the Roman Catholic Church in her struggle for authority. The Popes made treaties with this nation and that nation for the extermination of other powers. Politically, Europe in the fifteenth century was in constant turmoil.

The Northern Renaissance. Mention needs to be made, at this time, of the Northern or Transalpine Renaissance for it greatly influenced the lives of Erasmus and Colet. In Italy, the Renaissance mood stressed the individual through a return to classical art and literature. For about a century, the Renaissance stayed within bound of Italy, but, through the invasion of Charles VIII of France (1494) and the traveling scholars, the individualistic spirit of the Renaissance diffused itself all over Europe. "With magnetic touch, it roused the slumbering nations of the north to vigorous intellectual life. It took on varied qualities and aspects in accordance with ethnic traditions, racial temperament, and the

national characteristics of the various peoples by whom it was taken up."[1] No movement is shifted from one country to another in exactly the same form; each nation must adapt new ideas to fit its own circumstances. In the northern countries, the new spirit of inquiry clothed itself in the revival of conscience. The study of the classics led the scholars of the north back to the study of the ancient church classics. Stress was placed upon social regeneration. The individual was to be developed, but not merely for his own sake. Society was to benefit by the growth of the individual. German termperament, German traditions, German pietism poured into the Renaissance stream from Italy. Emphasis was put upon the simple Christian life and the ancient learning was used to further develop this religious life. The Transalpine Renaissance had a more difficult struggle to endure than did the Italian Renaissance for northern countries were under the regime of scholasticism. They did not accept easily the new methods and beliefs of the new learning. Yet the spirit of the Northern Renaissance led scholars to search for a reconciliation of the pagan and Christian ideas of ancient lore. Men were needed who could combine the Hellenistic classics with Judean authority and tradition.

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1 Hulme, E. M. The Renaissance, p. 106.

Conclusion. Thus, in the world of the fifteenth century there flowed streams of new thought, of new energy, of new spirit which was to revolutionize succeeding centuries. It was a chaotic age and a challenging one. Into this jig-saw-puzzle world came two men who were destined to be of great influence in the progress of their generation.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE OF ERASMUS TO 1499.

The Netherlands "I cannot deny that I am a Hollander by birth, from that part, if one may trust the maps, which borders on France rather than on Germany, but assuredly from the region situated on the frontiers of France and Germany."[1]

At the time of the birth of Erasmus, the Low Countries by the Sea, or, as we now know them, the Netherlands, had been the battleground of rival powers for years. They were a divided group with no national unity. Trade from England, Scotland, Germany, France floated up and down the Rhine or through the paths of the North Sea. With commercial trade came new ideas of life and culture as well as of wealth. The towns of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Brussels were known far and wide as towns of trade and wealth.

Holland was but a province or county of the Low Countries, and, in the fifteenth century, formed a part of the territory annexed by the Duke of Burgundy. It was a land of trade and navigation, noted for its herring fisheries. Men of wealthier provinces looked down upon the people as "boatmen and peasants". Strangers laughed at the rude manners and deep drinking of the Hollanders but stayed to gain some of their real religious zeal and piety. The county

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1 Erasmus Letter to Peter Manius, 1520.

had felt the influence of such men as Gerhardt Groote and Thomas à Kempis who were known for their religious devotion. It had sent forth men of culture and high ideals. There was a simplicity and naturalness about the life in Holland that made for rugged characters and fine minds coupled with religious devotion and piety. The tradesmen were of hearty stock, devoted to their ideals of thrift, honesty, and piety with unswerving loyalty.

"If the mind of a man inherits its qualities from the stock to which he belongs, there was no liklier spot in Europe to be the birthplace of a vigorous, independent thinker."[1] We believe the mind of a man does inherit its qualities from the stock to which he belongs and that Erasmus owed a debt to his native background that he could never repay. Its stability, free thinking, ruggedness, naturalness, and devotion were ingrained in his character. It gave him no national ties but allowed him to claim all nations as his birthplace, all lands as his home.

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1 Froude, J. A. Life and Letters of Erasmus, p. 1.

Birth and Parentage

The birth of Erasmus is shrouded in mystery. The exact year and day of his birth are not known, nor are the exact names of his parents. One reason for this indefiniteness is that the only available evidence is a scattered group of references, made by Erasmus in his later life, and usually with a deep set purpose. It is known that he was born out of wedlock which probably accounts for his reticence in speaking of his early childhood. Then too, as always in his writings, Erasmus runs a thread of truth interwoven with a thread of fiction through his words and it is impossible to separate the two.

Some indirect references point to the year 1469 as the year of his birth; others which are more direct suggest the years 1466 or 1467. Preserved Smith,[1] Albert Hyma[2], and others base their belief in the year 1469 on the suggestion that, as he grew older, Erasmus tended to make himself appear older in order to save the reputation of his father. Local tradition, also posits the year 1469 as the proper birth date.[3] On the other hand, other authors as John Joseph Mangan[4] and Ephraim Emerton[5] feel the year 1466 to be the more exact one. It is not necessary for us to enter the discussion. We may

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1 Smith, Preserved Erasmus 2 Hyma, Albert The Youth of Erasmus
3 Loos, Cornelius Illustrium Germaniae Scriptorum Catalogus, 1582.
4 Mangan, J. J. Life, Letters and Influence of Erasmus.
5 Emerton, E Erasmus.

simply state that Desiderius Erasmus was born between the years of 1466 and 1469 in the city of Rotterdam on the eve of the vigil of St. Simon and St. Jude, (October 27th).

"Around his parentage he wove a web of romance from which only one fact emerges clearly - that his father was at some time a priest."[1] Erasmus was the son of Gerard and Margaret of Gouda, a town about twelve miles from Rotterdam. There are varied accounts of their relationships. Local tradition tells that he was a parish priest and she, the daughter of a physician, who was working in his home. This version is woven into a romantic novely by Charles Reade.[2] Other suggestions are made that the family of Gerard intended him for the priesthood. He, however, refused to enter Orders because of his love for Margaret. One son was born of this love, but, three years later, just before a second child was to be born, Gerard went to Rome. There he copied old manuscripts to earn his way and there his family sent him word that Margaret had died. In his sorrow, he became a priest and returned to Gouda. There, he found that the rumor of Margaret's death was false for she, with her two sons, Peter and Erasmus, was living in Gouda. Gerard, however, did not forsake his priestly vows and never again lived with Margaret. The second son was named

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1 Allen, P. S. The Age of Erasmus, p. 33.
2 Reade, Charles The Cloister and the Hearth.

Erasmus and not until later in life did he call himself Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus. The two boys, Peter and Erasmus, were brought up by their mother and grandmother, although the father provided the money for their education. Gerard seems to have had some education in Latin, was the owner of a small library, and must have been a man of some ability.

It is possible that Erasmus did not know of his illegitimate birth until his later life, yet we feel that Mr. Mangan's suggestion that the stigma of an illegitimate birth hounded him through life is a plausible one. "His birth to him was a thing of shame which poisoned his whole life. He had a proud and aristocratic spirit and the sordidness of his father's lack of dignity in consorting with a servant was utter humiliation. He never mentioned either of them with affection and never named them in his writings more than once during his whole life."[1] The characters of many men are often traceable to the training of their early homes. Erasmus, however, was one who always fought his way alone. Perhaps this very fact served to spur him on.

School Days When he was four years old, Erasmus went to school in Gouda under Peter Winckel where he learned to

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1 Mangan, J. J. Life, Character, and Influence of Erasmus, p. 4.

read and write in the Dutch language.

At nine years of age, Erasmus, and his brother Peter were sent by their father to Deventer, there to attend the school in connection with the Church of St. Leubin's. The mother accompanied them, but during the Deventer residence, was a victim of the plague.

Erasmus never spoke highly of the school in Deventer; in fact, called it "barbarous" and "years wasted". Yet, here he came, for the first time, under the influence of the new humanistic learning as well as under the religious devotion of the Brethren of the Common Life.

Gerard Groote, the head of the Brethren of the Common Life, had been one of the founders of the Deventer School. As was the custom of the Order, the school was not entirely controlled by the Brethren but members of the Order acted as masters. Therefore, it was a school of strongly religious character and life was a disciplined routine consisting of studies and prayers.

The life of a schoolboy in the fifteenth century was not a particularly pleasant one. The younger boys had to serve as "fags" of the older ones and were brutally abused by their masters as well. Much that Erasmus condemns about

this school might be said of any other fifteenth century school. Life was one of dull monotony.

Under the Brethren, Erasmus learned the elements of Latin grammar, using the grammars of Eberard and John Garland. "Heavens! what a time that was when the couplets of John Garland were read out to the boys, accompanied by a prolix commentary. A great part of the school was employed in dictating, repeating, and saying by heart some silly verses."[1]

There were, of course, few textbooks in use at that time in any school. The customary procedure was for the master to lecture or dictate sentences to the boys who were required to memorize or to write down every word the master said. Not only Garland and Eberard were used, but Erasmus also studied the Pater meus* and the Tempora.** All of them were equally monotonous and the hours spent by the boys in the memorization of set rules and sentences seemed, to them, to be a waste of time. Early in his monastic life, however, Erasmus shows the results of these years in Deventer. They may well have been preparatory years when he was slowly laying the foundation for future learning.

Erasmus was at Deventer from about 1475 to 1484. Even though he writes scathingly of the school, he does admit

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1 Letter of Erasmus, Vol. III L. B. Edition
* The Pater meus - an exercise book with paradigms of the declensions.
** The Tempora - a similar manual for the conjugations.

that "a breath of better learning" came through John Sintheim, Alexander Hegius, and Rudolphy Agricola. Sintheim is said to have recognized Erasmus' ability and predicted a great future for him. Hegius became headmaster during Erasmus' time and must have made a deep impression upon the mind of the young boy. It is possible that from these three men, Erasmus gained his first insight into the charm of a life of learning and a desire to gain a simplicity of Christian living. Albert Hyma has devoted a section of his book[1] to the thesis that Erasmus was "indelibly stamped" with the religious devotion, the desire for the true understanding of the Scriptures, and the ideal of a religiously devoted life when he left Deventer School. Though Erasmus himself gives the Brethren little credit, it is certain that they exerted a strong influence over his early years. Perhaps, in Deventer, also, among the aisles and chapels of the Church he caught the first breath of that new hope to which he was to devote his whole life.[2]

Either, just before he went to Deventer (according to Mangan) or during the Deventer school years (according to Smith) Erasmus spent about twelve months in the choir school at Utrecht.

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1 Hyma, Albert The Christian Renaissance.
2 Allen, P. S. The Age of Erasmus, p. 33.

Peter and Erasmus were called back to Gouda, but shortly after their return, Gerard died, leaving the boys in the care of three guardians. In his letter to the papal secretary, Erasmus uses forceful language in describing these guardians, calling them "harpies", "thiefs" who were stealing from helpless boys. These three men felt that the monastic life was one of satisfaction and service and suggested that the brothers become monks. However, the two boys desired more learning and, in order to satisfy their desires, the guardians allowed them several more years in school at 's Hertogenbosch (Bois-le-Duc). There, the brothers lived in the Fraterhouse itself and, again, Erasmus can not say enough in derision of these "kidnappers of youth".

> "Their chief care, should they see any youth of unusually high spirit and quick disposition (of which nature are almost all very fertile minds) is to break his spirit and humble him by blows, threats, scoldings, and other devices, which they call 'breaking'; and thus to fit him for the monastic life."[1]

Monks of these centuries did try, by all means fair or foul, to gain novitiates for the monasteries, yet they believe with all sincerity that the monastic life was one of high privilege.

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1 Erasmus, Letter to Grunnius, Ep. 447

After Bois-le-Duc, Peter and Erasmus returned to Gouda and again, the guardians suggested that they enter a monastery. The picture that Erasmus paints for us of this period of his life is one of constant enforcement. The account was written in later life when all of his earlier years seemed to be colored with gloom. He states that the guardians had misused the money left by his father and were, therefore, anxious that the boys should enter a monastery where they would need no money. Probably, this was a fiction of Erasmus' mind and if the real truth be known, there was not enough money for university educations for both sons of Gerard. Much may be said on the side of the guardians for Erasmus, as a young man of seventeen, with a head full of learning, with little desire to earn his living, with a rather high opinion of his own capacities, was not an easy person with whom to cope. They undoubtedly felt that the monastic life was the finest for the young men of their day. The rather cock-sure young man of seventeen sees this advice as pressure and tells the story of constant force, loss of temper, and cleverly arranged meetings. Erasmus constantly refused to enter a monastery although the older brother, Peter, was persuaded to join an Order, and thereby gained the dislike of his brother, for Erasmus, later in life,

speaks of him as a dissolute young man. After visiting several monasteries, Erasmus one day met a friend who described to him the leisure time of the monastery, the opportunity to study, and the easy life led by the novitiate. This was the "straw that broke the camel's back", and Erasmus entered the monastery of Steyn.

The Monastery. Erasmus portrays, in a later letter, a boy of fifteen years of age entering the monastery, weakened by fever, and forced by all friends to enter the monastic life. In reality, he was about twenty-one, well educated, with a keen mind and a strong will of his own. His was not a character suited to the life of a monk but he seems to have wisely chosen a place which would allow him leisure to pursue his studies under no financial obligation. Always, he denounced monastic orders and throughout the years struggled to rid himself of the control of the Order and to gain his freedom.

Yet, here in Steyn he composed his first writings, here he had leisure to study, here he made many steadfast friends. He studied Ovid, Cicero, Juvenal, Seneca, Virgil, and Latin translations of Greek authors to be found in the library at Steyn. He seems to have given little time during this period to the study

of the Bible, but speaks often in his letters of Jerome, Cicero, and Seneca. During the days in the monastery he made his first acquaintance with one who was to exert strong influence over his mind - Lorenzo Valla, the Italian humanist who first questioned the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine. He read Valla's manuscripts and, in a series of letters exchanged with Cornelius of Gouda, Erasmus brilliantly defends Valla. "As a stylist, a critic, an anticlerical, and an exponent of a completely undogmatic Christianity, the Dutchman was the Italian's truest disciple".[1]

During the monastic life, Erasmus' pen was ever facile. In Steyn, he wrote his first treatise On Contempt of the World in which he assails, curiously enough in view of his later life, the vanities of the world and praises a life of solitude.

> "One plan of life suits some, another suits another. So first it behooves you to examine for yourself and select a plan of life which commends itself to your judgment, remembering the saying of St. Paul's 'prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'"[2]

In these years, he started the Antibarbari which was to be later recovered in part and published. Poetry was another distinct element in his literary life. Through all of his writings, he

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1 Smith, Preserved Erasmus, p. 15.
2 Erasmus On Contempt of the World, quoted from Mangan, p. 40.

exhibits a fine style, an ability to command language, and a knowledge of the classics.

Furthermore, during the Steyn days, he busied himself with painting. The record is that in 1484 he painted a picture of "Christ on the Cross with Mary and St. John". This is another indication of his leisurely and rather happy life within monastic walls.

Throughout the days spent at Steyn, the natural ability of Erasmus for friendship showed itself clearly. He found several kindred spirits - Servatius, later Prior; William Herman, in conjunction with whom he wrote poetry; and the aforementioned Cornelius of Gouda. These friends exchanged letters of a classical nature crammed with references to Latin classics and with clever manipulation of Latin metre. "These young poets believed themselves to be guardians of a new light amidst the fullness and barbarism which oppressed them."[1]

After seven years of monastic life, the pressure of the four walls became distasteful to Erasmus. Although he found time to pursue his studies, he was somewhat limited in his reading; although he was allowed to write continuously, he felt under restraint; although he found some kindred souls who loved the student's life as did he, the general tone of the monastery was one of mediocrity. He was eager to get away.

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1 Huizinga, J. Erasmus, p. 17.

Brother Nicholas Werner of Steyn was to Erasmus as John von Staupitz was to Luther - counsellor and friend. Brother Werner was one of the elder monks. He watched the young monk, Erasmus, and became convinced that the man would would be greater without the monastic walls. He suggested to Erasmus that he ask for permission to enter the service of a Bishop. If Erasmus had not taken the advice of Nicholas Werner , he might have remained within the walls of the monastery, a discontented and useless monk. But there came to him one who was great enough to see beyond the immediate years and suggested a vocation in the world. Very soon, the opportunity presented itself and Erasmus was able to take flight from the four walls of his monastic prison.

With the Bishop of Cambrai "The pen, rather than the brush, unlocked the gates of the house of fame for Erasmus, and also found him early employment."[1] Erasmus had already won his spurs as a Latinist and, as a result, was appointed Latin secretary to the Bishop of Cambrai. The Bishop's hopes were high for the "red hat" of a Cardinal and he had need of one who could serve as a Latin correspondent. A journey to Rome was proposed and this, perhaps, was another inducement to Erasmus for, with all other Renaissance scholars, he desired to visit Italy.

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1 Smith, Preserved Erasmus, p. 18.

The Roman visit did not materialize, perhaps because of lack of money, perhaps because of ecclesiastical politics. Erasmus was greatly disappointed. However, the time spent with the Bishop served him well for he gained a glimpse of the brilliant court life of Burgundy, he gained a patron for further study, as well as made a friend who was to stand by him in the next few years.

The court offered few opportunities for study and Erasmus, through his newly made friend, James Batt, suggested to the Bishop that he matriculate at the University of Paris for a theological degree. The Bishop assented, placed a small sum at the disposal of Erasmus and sent him on his way to Paris.

The University of Paris.

> "Thus 'mid hope and fear, Erasmus challenged the world for a place therein, and Batt was his faithful and kindly henchman, ready at all times and under all circumstances to subserve his interests and do him loyal service. For by now, Erasmus had tasted the sweet savor of fame, and had hitched his chariot to that star, while Batt had hitched his wagon to Erasmus."[1]

Paris itself was a typical medieval city with low houses, narrow crooked streets, with no drainage nor lights. There were, however, large palaces, cathedrals, abbeys, and college buildings which denoted the importance of Paris as the capital city of France.[2]

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1 Mangan, J. J. Life, Character and Influence of Erasmus, p. 53.
2 Smith, Preserved · Erasmus, p. 19-20.

The University of Paris was one of the oldest and most famous universities of Europe. It was the center of humanism in France, yet, at the same time, a stronghold of scholasticism. The Faculty of Theology was the most celebrated of all the faculties in the University. A course for a doctorate in theology covered about fifteen years. Four years were spent in the study of the Bible and two years of work on Peter Lombard's Sentences. The student then received his first theological degree "baccalaureus ad biblia". After lecturing and studying for three more years, he received a "baccalaureus formatus", and finally, after continuing his student life for six more years, the doctor's degree in theology was conferred upon him.

Although theSorbonne was intense in its religious fervor and study, humanism and reform were already under way in Paris. Many realized the need of reformation within the Church but did not seem to feel that it could be done in intellectual paths, but by reformation of clerical and monastic abuses.

Into this atmosphere of scholasticism and humanism, came Erasmus in 1495. He was in Orders and thus able to dispense with the years of undergraduate work for the theological degree. In April 1498, he received his degree as bachelor of theology. He attended lectures on the Bible and the Sentences, preached

a few sermons, and lived the combined life of student and master. Through these years in Paris, he developed a growing hatred of the schoolmen, especially of the Scotists, and their eternal disputation over minute doctrines of the Church.

> "What if you saw Erasmus sit yawning among those cursed Scotists while Gryllard is lecturing from his lofty chair? If you observed his contracted brow, his staring eyes, his anxious face, you would say he was another man. ..Do not interpret what I have said as directed against theology itself, which, as you know, I have always singularly cultivated, but as jokes against the theologasters of our age, unsurpassed by any in the murkiness of their brains, in the barbarity of their speech, the stupidity of their natures, the thorniness of their doctrine, the harshness of their manners, the hypocrisy of their lives, the violence of their language, and the blackness of their hearts."1

The University was divided into colleges. One of these, the College of Montaigu, was the choice of Erasmus. It was founded in 1314 but had fallen into decay only to be revived by John Standonck, a member of the Brethren of the Common Life. He was a devout, religious man believing that the lives of the students under his control should be guided as his had been - by the strictest discipline and asceticism. The purpose of the College of Montaigu was to provide a home for poor students living in semi-monastic atmosphere.

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1 Erasmus Letter to Thomas Grey, 1497. Ep. 64.

With the usual extremity of an ascetic, Standonck carried the routine of discipline so far that he endangered the lives of some of his students. Yet, all he did in the College of Montaigu was done under the conviction that the life of poverty was the highest one. Erasmus, with his natural desire for freedom, hated the strict discipline of the College and has besmirched the name of the College of Montaigu for all ages. Much of this hatred came as a result of his own personal desire for a life of comfort and ease and from his dislike of control. It was a sharp contrast to come from the Bishop's table to one of mean and frugal fare. The complaining Erasmus forgot that he was receiving food and rent gratis and shot his "Erasmian arrows" with sure aim at the college of his hatred. Rabelais, who had never seen Montaigu but had read Erasmus' Colloquies in which he derides the College, called it the "lousy college of Montaigu". It probably is true that sanitary conditions at the college were poor, that flogging was permitted, that the food was rancid at times, yet these conditions existed in many colleges of that century. The derisive statements that he flings at the College give us a rather good estimate of Erasmus in those days. Always self-centered with a natural egotism, all the world revolved around him and his wishes. When these were not

granted in the college every member of the faculty and student body received his scorn. In his microcosmic life, Erasmus exaggerated the life in Paris when he insisted that many youths, in their first year at the College of Montaigu, were brought to blindness, death, and madness.

After a year in Montaigu, Erasmus went back to the Netherlands to recuperate. Upon his return to Paris, he needed more financial help and began the tutoring of students. During the Parisian days, his letters are constantly complaining of his lack of money. Notes were written in desparation to James Batt; letters full of praise and eulogy were written to Lady Anne Veere. These brought forth money for study, but always forgetful of kindness, Erasmus derides the smallness of the gifts that all friends sent to him. There is scarcely a letter during these years that does not mention his need of funds and the troubles that weigh upon him.

In Paris, also, Erasmus made many friends. He was brilliant, with a ready wit; he had the gift of flattery and was able to charm many. Soon after his arrival in Paris, he had made quick acquaintances with the humanistic scholars of the day. Faustus Andrelinus, a brilliant but notoriously immoral Italian humanist and Robert Gaguin, a famous scholar, were impressed with Erasmus' style and ability. The students

whom he tutored gathered around him to listen to his words, to marvel at his ability, and to laugh at his scintillating wit.

During the Paris days, Erasmus wrote a preface to The History of France by Robert Gaguin. This fact in itself gives evidence of the position Erasmus held in the world of scholars of Paris, for Gaguin was a well known and beloved humanist. Erasmus spent much time in writing during these years, but published little.

After his return from the Netherlands, Erasmus made the acquaintance of the young English students, Thomas Grey, Robert Fisher, and William Blunt later to be Lord Mountjoy. The group had many a pleasant evening together discussing classics and letters. The correspondence between the members of the group give some idea of the sense of freedom that pervaded their friendship.

Through Lord Mountjoy, Erasmus was persuaded to leave Paris for a visit to England in 1499. The decision must have been a sudden one, caused perhaps by his inability to collect enough money to study in Italy. Whatever be his reason, the visit to England provided a new opportunity for Erasmus.

We have, thus far, surveyed the life of Erasmus from birth to his first visit to England. What sort of a man

would he present to the Anglo-Saxon people on the other side of the water?

He was a man who had worked his way independently through all barriers for a life of learning; one who was not loth to take advantage of every opening for further advancement of self. He was a man of the keenest of minds, with a remarkable memory and an ability for satire. He was a man emaciated by his rigorous life of study and natural ill health; complaining, demanding comforts from life and not being afraid to engage friends and foes in a combat for patronage and finance, willing to write eulogies of people for whom he cared nothing if it would mean a penny. He was a man who had come to Paris with the avowed intention of studying theology, but, seemingly with the unavowed intention to center his life around humanistic learning. He was Erasmus, the humanist. He felt himself to be the orator and poet, the tutor and master. He was a man with the "troubles of Ulysses", restless by nature, with a growing sense of persecution exhibiting itself in feelint that men cared enough about him to abuse him.

"In stature not tall, but not noticeably short; in figure well built and graceful; of an extremely delicate constitution, sensitive to the slightest changes of climate, food or drink...His complexion was fair; light blue eyes and

yellowish hair. Though his voice is weak, his enunciation is distinct; the expression of his face cheery; his manner and conversation polished, affable, even charming."[1]

Altogether, Erasmus was a man of contrasts, of moods, yet one who could intrigue and charm. He was a man to stand steadfast one moment but falter the next. He was a man who needed a steady hand to guide him in the final choice of his life work, to give him aid in finding some sense of inner restlessness, and to guide him towards the star of his ideal.

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1 Beatus Rheanus' description of Erasmus, quoted from Encyclopedia Britannica "Erasmus".

CHAPTER III.

THE LIFE OF JOHN COLET

TO 1499.

Birth and Parentage

It needs to be said, before writing of the life of John Colet, that his earliest biographer was Erasmus. In fact, nearly every detail of Colet's life is known through Erasmus' writings and these, therefore, become the basis for this study.

John Colet was born in the year 1466 or 1467. He was one of the oldest of twenty-two children, eleven girls and eleven boys, born to Sir Henry Colet and Christian Knevet.

His father, Sir Henry Colet, had been born in Wendover, on the family estate but came to London about 1430. There he soon rose to high positions of honor and ability and was known as a man of honesty and unswerving devotion to his ideals. Twice he was Lord Mayor of London. Not only was he charitable in giving his time for civic service, but he was equally charitable with his money. He endowed churches, left money for poor scholars at Oxford and Cambridge, and gave liberally to all religious enterprises.

In 1465, Henry Colet married Christian Knevet, a woman of high social position and wealth. Yet Christian was to contribute more to the home of Henry Colet than wealth and social prominence. She was the possessor of splendid qualities of head and heart. Her home became a center of

simplicity and culture. Christian Colet survived all of her twenty-two children, twenty-one of whom died before 1499. The tragedy of their married life must have been the death of their children.

We know little about the early childhood of John Colet. He had a certain reticence about speaking of his youth and rarely referred to it. We can only conjecture that his life would be that of a normal boy born in a home of wealth and culture, surrounded by love and affection. Yet, his boyhood years must have been tinged with sorrow because of the death of his brothers and sisters.

School Days Strange as it may seem, we have no definite knowledge of the schools which John Colet attended in his youth. Most biographers assume that most of his early schooldays were spent at St. Anthony's Hospital in Threadneedle Street, London. Though we have no record of his days there, yet it is possible to envision his life in St. Anthony's from the records of other schools of the century. Woodcuts from old books give an idea of the schools of the fifteenth century. An awe-inspiring teacher sits in front with a birch in one hand and an open book on his knee. His forefinger traces the lines as the boy stands nearby reading

from it. The other students are seated on the floor or on little three-legged stools. The lesson, in general, is oral and the boys learn it as the master reads. The books used would probably be the A B C Book[1], a Latin grammar of Donatus'[2], Cato's Disticha de Moribus[3] and perhaps Terrence or Virgil. All of the textbooks were dull and monotonous to learn; all were tinged with moral precepts or religious adages.

Colet, in St. Anthony's School, would be in a much more medieval atmosphere than Erasmus in the Deventer School, for in England, the spirit of new learning had not yet reached the grammar schools. On the other hand, in Deventer, the Brethren of the Common Life had incorporated the new learning in the curriculum of the school. Probably both schools had a strong religious emphasis, yet the one at Deventer was more apt to be one with a natural simplicity of the religious life.

University of Oxford

In 1483, John Colet went to Oxford to study. Again, we do not know his exact whereabouts in the school but evidences point to Magdalen College as the most probable college. Our only hope, in endeavoring to reconstruct the progress of Colet's life and mind, is to accept the suggestion of Magdalen College as his "alma mater" and build his life there as best we can.

WhenColet came to Oxford, it was famous for its learning although it was still entangled in the mesh of scholastic disputation. The buildings, though not as magnificent as they were to later become, were large and imposing. The walled city enclosed colleges, halls, and monastic dormitories. The life of a university scholar in the fifteenth century was not an attractive one. Many of the students had to beg for enough money to live on. Dormitories were poorly furnished. To us, the life of the student in Oxford must have been one of gloom and squalor yet even under such conditions the fire of intellectual ambition burned with intensity.

What subjects did Colet study at Oxford?

> "During his younger days, in England, he diligently mastered all the philosophy of the schools, and gained the title expressive of a knowledge of the seven liberal arts. Of these arts, there was not one in which he had not been industriously and successfully trained. For he had both eagerly devoured the works of Cicero and diligently searched into those of Plato and Plotinus; while there was no branch of mathematics that he left untouched."[1]

According to an ordinance at Oxford in 1431, the requirements for an arts degree consisted of studying the Trivium (Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic) and the Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Music, Geometry,

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1 Erasmus Lives of Vitrier and Colet, p. 21.

and Astronomy), with a few additions. Eight years of study was required for the Master of Arts degree. Priscian was the sole authority for the study of grammar; Euclid, the authority for geometry. Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, were studied for rhetoric. The writings of Boethius were used for music and arithmetic. The study of the three philosophies - natural, moral, metaphysical was based upon the treatises of Aristotle alone. In addition to these books, it is evident that Colet studied Plato and Plotinus to satisfy his own inclination. It is possible that his interest in Italy was aroused in studying these translations of Plato and Plotinus made by Ficino about 1485.

It is not known when Colet decided definitely to enter the clerical profession. Certainly it must have been in the early years of his Oxford experience if not before. Sir Henry Colet must have opened all opportunities to his son and may have suffered disappointment when John Colet decided upon the profession of a clergyman. However, his father was not to allow him to be a poor cleric. The first benefice granted to Colet was in 1485, two years after he went to Oxford, and other benefices quickly followed. The first "living" granted to him in 1485 indicates that already his mind

must have been made up and his life was centering itself around theology. Perhaps the early deaths of his brothers and sisters had turned his thoughts in serious paths and this choice of a religious life was the natural consequence.

His study at Oxford was completed and his thoughts turned toward Italy, the center of the new learning. Already, two of his countrymen, Linacre and Grocyn, were enthusiastic about Italian enthusiasm for the classics of the past.

Foreign Travel. "After this", says Erasmus, "like a merchant seeking goodly wares, he visited France and then Italy."[1] Upon this single sentence, the travel of Colet in Italy must be based. Here and there we meet an indirect reference to his foreign travels but this reference of Erasmus' is the only direct evidence of the whereabouts of his foreign travel. Again, it is necessary to use imagination based upon available facts. What influences he there felt, what persons he there met, what feelings came over him as he realized the significance of this revival in Italy, no one will ever ascertain. It is our purpose, only, to endeavor to reconstruct a sketch of his travel in order that we may better understand the man after his return to England.

The objects sought by all scholars in the fifteenth century in Ital and France are easy to understand. Universities

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1 Erasmus Lives of Vitrier and Colet.

in both countries were famous. Scholars journed to Bologna to study law, to Salerno for medicine, or to Paris for theology. It is probable that Colet followed the example of many other students, perhaps going to Orleans, Bologna, and Paris to study. We also learn, from Erasmus, that while in foreign universities, he mastered the Church Fathers and gained a decided preference for Dionysius the Areopagite, Origen, Ambrose, Cyprian, and Jerome over Augustine, Duns Scotus, Aquinas and the other medieval schoolmen, still in vogue in the English universities. This statement of Erasmus' may well cover a number of years' study rather than the short time spent in foreign universities, yet we believe it to be indicative of the suggestion that here, in foreign lands, John Colet first gleaned a desire to return to the old sources of the Scriptures for Christian living.

In Florence, Italy, the new learning was flourishing under the patronage of the Medici. Linacre, Selling, Grocyn and other English scholars sojourned for a time in Florence. Surely, Colet would have stopped to listen to the scholars in that famous city. Some of the great names had been erased from the tablets of the living by the time of Colet's arrival in Florence. Lorenzo de Medici, Politian, Pico della Mirandola - all had died. Yet, in Florence, there would still have been numerous artists and sculptors of repute as well as philosophers and a religious reformer.

Pages might be spent in painting a picture of the meeting of Savonarola, that fiery spirit of Florence, and John Colet, the gentle youth from England. There is no direct evidence that the two met in Florence yet the later writings of Colet are so strongly colored with the spirit of Savonarola that it is very possible he gained some of his ideas from the sermons of the Florentine. Or even if Colet did not go to Florence, he could scarcely have been anywhere in Italy and hot have heard of the outstanding figure of the hour - Fra Savonarola, who railed against the abuses of the clergy and even dared to attack the Pope himself. If he did not meet the Florentine monk, Colet is still his spiritual disciple.

Rome would surely be another stopping place of Colet's, devout Catholic as he was. What impressions he received from the holy places, we do not know. His lectures and writings suggest that he saw or heard of the immorality of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as of the glory and splendor of their courts. Perhaps to this spot may be traced his hatred of clerical immoralities.

Paris would be a natural place for Colet to visit on his continental travel, for Paris was the home of theology and already Colet had decided upon a theological career. There, he first hears of Erasmus through his friend Robert Gaguin.

After about three years abroad, Colet came back to England. Other men had returned from Italy "tinctured with the frivolities of the Renaissance"[1], yet Colet returned to lecture in Oxford on the Epistles of St. Paul. It would have been easy for the son of a high official, interested in all paths of learning, to return to his own country enthused with Latin and Greek classics, the art and architecture of the ancient pagans. "Why Colet did not become imbued with the culture of the Italian humanists we do not know. It may have been through the influence of Savonarola; it may have been from a revulsion of spirit, disgusted with the pseudo-Christianity of the day; or it may have been owing to his natural seriousness of disposition, and to the teaching of his excellent parents."[2] It was not the things he received from Italy that were to be important in his life but the things he took with him to Italy. He arrived in England in 1496 or 1497 as he had left it in 1493 - a youth detached, keenly observant, serious, sure of his purpose.

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1 Lupton, J. H. A Life of John Colet, p. 56.
2 Ibid, p. 56.

Oxford Lectures About the spring of 1496, Colet was back in England. He was ordained deacon on December 17, 1497 and priest on March 25, 1497-8.

Immediately upon his return, he took up his residence at Oxford and there began a series of lectures upon St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. It was a customary procedure for young candidates for theological degrees to lecture upon some book of the sacred canon. Thus, it was no new thing for a young man, returning from a foreign country after several years of study, to lecture in the University.

John Colet was well fitted for lecturing on the Scriptures. He had studied the Church Fathers, the Bible, and the Latin and Greek classics. His ease as a speaker, his sincerity of purpose, and his general charm combined to make his lectures of great value. The lectures were given gratis to any one who would attend, and soon, the attendance was made up of students, divines, monks, and tutors. His original comments on the Scriptures, at first shocked some of the more conservative scholastics, yet they stayed to hear him to the end. His method was new. He abandoned the scholastic isolation of one text and treated the Epistle in its entirety. Furthermore, he endeavored to interpret the Scriptures in their own background, comparing St. Paul's references to Roman society

with Seutonius' history. He felt the letters to the Romans to be living material, written by a living author, and traced the personality of Paul throughout. "He was the first to apply critical methods of the new learning, to discover the exact meaning of the books of the Holy Scripture."[1] Not only did he endeavor to reconstruct the background of the Epistle but he brought the material down to the present time. As he lectured on the writings of Paul, he gave practical examples from their own surroundings. He made the content mean something to them personally. Much of his own belief in the necessity of loving God as well as of knowing Him, in the simplicity of the Christian life, in the mission of the Church, crept into his commentaries. He urged his listerners to correct the abuses of the Church in order that it might fulfill its mission - to help men to live better lives.

> "O priests! O priesthood! O the detestable boldness of wicked men in our generation! O the abominable impiety of those miserable priests, of whom this age of ours contains a great multitude who fear not to rush from the bosom of some foul harlot into the temple of the church, to the altar of Christ, to the mysteries of God...O Jesu Christ! wash for us not our feet only but our hands and our head."

The lectures produced an immediate effect. Men were attracted to his humanized religion. Colet, in writing to the Abbot of

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1 Lindsay, T. M. A History of the Reformation, p. 165.

Winchcombe, tells of a visit from a priest who was so interested in his lectures that he came to his rooms and talked far into the night about the first chapter of Romans.

During this period of his life, there are several letters written by Colet which give indication of his thought and purpose. He was always the enthusiastic and helpful friend, never willing to keep what he had learned to himself, but desiring to share his fortune with all friends. Radulphus asks for an interpretation of the "dark places of the Scriptures" and Colet replies with a thorough and lengthy treatise on the Mosaic creation. He suggests that the first chapters of Genesis are to be treated as poetry, as an attempt on the part of a great lawgiver to accomodate his teaching to the understanding of an ignorant people. For another young friend, Edmund, Colet prepares a paraphrase of the text of the Roman Epistles. He was vitally interested in a study and interpretation of the pseud-Dionysian writings. These had been published in Paris and Colet regarded them as authoritative. Later, he was to find, through Grocyn and Erasmus, that the matter was greatly disputed. He drew up a series of abstracts from his studies suggesting that a symbolic meaning underlies all details of the sacerdotal and sacramental system and other beliefs of mystical nature. The perusal of this mystical literature seems to have intensified

his passion for ecclesiastical reform when he realized the sharp contrast of the present church with the ideals presented in these mystical writings.

Colet seems to have given a series of lectures later in 1498 on the Epistles to the Corinthians. In his later series, he is even more daring in attacking the corruptions of the church and the abuses of the day.

It was here, in Oxford, that Erasmus met John Colet in the year 1499. Again, we question of the man. What sort of a man would Erasmus find?

> "Even to the most critical among his hearers he seemed like one inspired, raised in voice, eye, his whole countenance and mien, out of himself. Severe as was the outer life of the new teacher, a severity marked by his plain black robe and the frugal table which he preserved amidst his later dignities, his lively conversation, his frank simplicity, the purity and nobleness of his life, even the keen outbursts of his troublesome temper, endeared him to a group of scholars."[1]

Portraits of John Colet show him to be a handsome man with a long thin face characteristic of the ascetic, with clear, piercing eyes and well-defined chin. He was a man to command attention by physical appearance alone.

He was a man who had known all the niceties and cultures of life but had chosen to follow the simple life of a clerical. He was a man who had studied classical learning, but always for a purpose - to better interpret the Scriptures. He was a man who had a steadying purpose in his life - whose every act strengthened that purpose and worked toward the final goal. He was a man with a singular originality of mind, who was daring in his intellectual persuits. He was a man who already hated the abuses of the Church, the subtleties of the schoolmen, and all warfare. He was a man of strength of character, having thought out his own decisions and, assured of their rightness, did not waver. He was a man who believed in the absolute love of God and the necessity of loving Him. He was a man guiding his life by a higher destiny than his own desires. His way of life was chosen and he had only to follow the path cut out for him with the guidance and help of God.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JOHN COLET AND ERASMUS.

First Meeting Thus, there were the two men - Erasmus and John Colet. The first had been born under the cloud of illegitimacy and poverty, both of which, with his innate tendencies, served to make the years of his youth restless and discontented. He disliked school days, he detested the monastery, and was disgruntled in the University of Paris. His mind was keen, his ability large, yet he seemed to have found no outlet for his energies. The second, Colet, had been born of wealth and position, brought up in school and university with all opportunities open to him. Early in his youth, he chose to follow the path of theology and bent all efforts toward that goal. He had travelled in Italy, returning with the same spirit of devotion that he had started with, but increased and deepened by his experiences in foreign lands. There was a rock foundation under the character of this man.

The two men were to meet in Oxford in the year 1499. Both were almost of the same age; both lovers of learning. What was to be the result of the friendship that was to develop between the two scholars? What influences will they bring to bear upon each other? The best way to trace any influences would be to follow, step by step, the course of their friendship until the death of John Colet in 1519. It is our purpose, in this chapter, to witness the meeting of the two men, to follow their

friendship throughout their lives until the death of one, then, in the next section, to summarize our findings.

At the invitation of Lord Mountjoy, Erasmus came to England in June 1499. The first few months of the visit were spent at Bedwell, the estate of Mountjoy's father-in-law. Erasmus, the young wanderer, was impressed with the cordiality and beauty of English life. For the first time he was a member of a home of culture with no worry over money or enforced systematization. A letter written in the summer of 1499 stressed his good humor and enthusiasm.

> "We, too, have made progress in England. The Erasmus you knew has almost become a good hunter, no bad rider, a courtier of some skill, bows with politeness, smiles with grace, and all this in spite of his nature...Nevertheless, did you but know the blessings of Britain, you would run hither with winged feet and if the gout stopped you, you would wish yourself another Daedalus."[1]

Later in the summer, Mountjoy, with his family and Erasmus, went to Greenwich, another country home. While there, Erasmus was presented to Prince Henry who was later to become King Henry VIII. Thus, Mountjoy was doing socially for Erasmus what Colet was to do for him intellectually.

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1 Erasmus, Epistle 103.

In October, Erasmus went to Oxford to stay at St. Mary's College, a monastery and college of his own Order. Through the kindness of Prior Richard Charnock, Erasmus was introduced to many new friends. Just after he arrived, a letter came from John Colet to whom he had been recommended by the Prior. Extracts from this letter and from Erasmus' reply will indicate the beginning of their acquaintance.

> "When I shall see you, I wll do for myself personally what others have done for you in your absence: that is, I will command myself to both the man and the scholar, as others have done for me, though undeservedly. For the inferior ought to be presented to the superior, and the less cultured to the one that is more highly accomplished...But, if there is anything within my humble sphere in which I can be at all of use or pleasure to you, it shall be as promptly and freely at your service as your preeminence could wish or demand...I rejoice that you have come to England; and I trust that our England may prove as agreeable to you as your learning, can, I think, be useful to her. My feelings toward you are and ever will be such as are due to a man whose worth and learning I esteem so highly. Farewell."[1]

Naturally, a foreign scholar would bring out his most polished phrases when one of Colet's reputation wrote to him. In his reply, Erasmus exhibits his characteristic exuberant, egotistic style:

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1 Colet to Erasmus, Erasmus Ep. 106

> "If I recognized anything at all in myself, dear Colet, worthy of even slight laudation, I would rejoice, with Hector in the play of Naevius, to be praised by you the most praised of men, on whose judgment I set so high a value that your tacit approbation would be more pleasing to me by far than if the entire Roman Forum were acclaiming and applauding me, or a multitude of ignorant men as vast as the army of Xerxes admired me. For as, following the custom of Horace, I never sought the praise of the fickle crowd, which, forsooth praises and blames with equal rashness; so I have ever considered it a most beautiful thing to be praised by excellent men, who are too sincere to praise any man falsely and too prudent to be deceived in him; men whose learning admits no taint of error and whose lives permit no suspiciion of flattery.. ..Wherefore, as well as I ought, I freely accept, revere, and love you for your prompt, ready and generous regard for me."[1]

Thus began the friendship of the two men. The next evidence of their meeting occurs in a letter written by Erasmus in November 1499 in which he describes a dinner at which the Prior, Colet, and others were present. In the course of the table talk, a discussion arose about the sacrifice of Cain and the sacrifice of Abel. Why should the offering of one have been accepted and the offering of the other rejected? Colet asserted that it was because, from the very first, Cain had offended in that he did not trust in the goodness of the

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1 Erasmus, Ep. 107.

Creator, and relying on his own efforts had been the first man to till the soil, while Abel fed his sheep contentedly on what grew spontaneously from the earth. Immediately "war broke out over the cups"[1], everyone disagreeing with Colet. He, however, "vanquished us all, for he seemed to rage with a certain sacred fury and to comport himself in some way grander and more sublime than would a mere man. Changed were his eyes, his voice, his face, his glances, and he appeared to be magnified, inspired by some divine influence."[2] To quell the discussion, Erasmus "took the part of the poet" and related a fable of Cain. In this discussion, there began to take root in the mind of Erasmus a new attitude toward theology. It is quite evident from the full letter that Erasmus was still the humanistic poet exhibiting his ability by telling a fable. He took no part in the more serious theological discussion else he would have, as was his wont, penned the pictures of his praises. Colet's part in the discussion is indicative of his ability to penetrate to the bottom of Scriptural texts - to suggest that it was the character of the man. The discussion gave Erasmus an idea of the real Colet who could so defend the truth he believed that he seemed like one inspired. "But his sincerity and earnestness of purpose, and the sense of reality conveyed in his

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1 Erasmus Ep. 116
2 Ibid

advocacy of any opinion he held to be true, must have done much to steady a mind like that of Erasmus, undecided as yet in the choice of an object of life, and, in particular, averse from the study of theology."[1]

They were talking one day of the schoolmen. Erasmus suggested that Thomas Aquinas was not as all schoolmen for he had studied the ancients as well as the Scriptures. Colet made no reply but when Erasmus pressed the point further, he turned with the exclamation:"What? do you extol to me such a man as Aquinaz? If he had not been very arrogant indeed, he would not so rashly and proudly have taken upon himself to define all things. And unless his spirit had been somewhat worldly, he would not surely have corrupted the whole teaching of Christ by mixing with his profane philosophy." Erasmus must have been nonplussed at the wrath of Colet's retort yet realized that there must have been serious and deep thought at the bottom of his statement. Although, Seebohm suggests that Erasmus was entirely on the side of the schoolmen with which view we do not agree, we feel that Colet shattered his respect for Aquinas and added to his growing hatred of all schoolmen..

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1 Lupton, J. H. A Life of JohnColet, p. 101.

Another discussion which admirably pictures the two men was an argument over the question of Christ's suffering in the Garden. Erarmus argued that the agony of Christ was caused by the natural fear of a cruel death; Colet disputed the assertion, saying that a Christ who had such exceeding love for humanity could not shrink from death, no matter how horrible it might be. He also brought forth the interpretation that Christ's agony was caused by his overwhelming feeling of the awful guilt of the Jews who were bringing destruction upon their heads. The argument was interrupted by Prior Charnock. Later, however, when Erasmus thought the matter over, consulted various books, he finally came to the decision that he was right. In his eagerness to prove his side, he wrote a long letter to Colet explaining, with some parade of learning, his viewpoint. In concluding his statements, he writes:

> "How rash it is in me, a mere tyro, to dare to encounter a commander - for one, whom you call a rhetorician, to venture upon theological ground, to enter an arena which is not mine...And now I await your attack. I await your mighty war-trumpet. I await those Coletian arrows, surer even than the arrows of Hercules. In the meantime I will array the forces of my mind; I will concentrate my ranks. I will prepare my reserve of books, lest I should not be able to stand your first charge."1

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1 Letters appended to Enchiridion, 1515.

This was the first of a series of letters exchanged by the two friends on this subject. Only one letter of Colet's is extant: "If the flint strikes together, any spark of fire is given out, let us both alike eagerly catch at it. For it is truth that we seek, not the upholding of an opinion; and, as argument rebuts argument, the truth will perchance flash out, like fire from steel when struck by steel."[1]

Throughout the discussion, Erasmus maintains the traditional position that the "Holy Scriptures may be interpreted in many senses, at least in any one kind"[2] while Colet assumes a more spiritual, and perhaps, more radical position.

"The more they exchanged ideas, sentiments, and opinions, the more each advanced in the other's estimation."[3] The days went by, the two men met often, exchanged letters, conversed together, and became stronger friends. During this time, Colet was lecturing on the Epistles of Paul in the University. He so strongly felt the necessity of interpreting the Bible in its own background in order to give the students the right understanding of it, that he desired others to join him in his work. It may well have been that he had watched Erasmus from the very first of their acquaintance and felt that he was able to undertake the task. In any case John Colet wrote to Erasmus asking that he stay in Oxford and work with him

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1 Letter appended to edition ofEnchiridion, 1518.
2 Colet. Letter appended to 1518 edition of Enchiridion.
3 Mangan, J. J. Life, Character, and Influence of Erasmus. p. 114.

in expounding the Scriptures. He suggested that Erasmus might lecture on Moses and Isaiah as he himself was lecturing on Paul. Or perhaps, if he did not feel equal to the task or did not desire to lecture on the Scriptures, he suggested that he stay to teach poetry or rhetoric. In the invitation we may discern the desire for the personal friendship of Erasmus, but also, the desire for fellowship in the work of the future. It was a high compliment that the serious, devoted man paid to the young Dutchman. We do not know the exact wording of Colet's letter but can judge its content from the reply of Erasmus which is extant. He answers by comdemning these theologians who quibble and cavil over studies and praises Colet for warring against them. It is a hard task but Colet will conquer all. Erasmus goes further to suggest that he cannot accept his invitation for he is not equal to the task.

> "My dear Colet, you are not wise to seek water from a dry rock, as Plautus says. How can I have the effrontery to teach what I have not learned? How shall I warm up others when I am myself shivering? It would seem to me rather than rashness itself were I to essaymy powers in so great a task. I did not come hither to teach poetry or rhetoric which ceased to be agreeable to me after they had ceased to be indispensable. That sort of teaching I must decline as beyond my capacity."

He then suggests that he is leaving shortly for Paris but he further writes:

> "So far is it from my mind to desire to discourage you in your excellent and pious endeavors that, since I can not yet suitably assist you, I promise you all the earnest encouragement and sympathy that you could wish. Nay more, as soon as I feelconscious of having the strength and the requisite ability, I will come to your aid and assist you to the best of my powers in defending the true theology. Meanwhile, nothing will give me greater pleasure than discussing daily between ourselves."[1]

We have no record further of the intercourse between the two friends during this first English visit. It might be possible to trace the influences of Colet upon the life of Erasmus in this first visit alone, for here were implanted the seeds of that friendship which was to give strength to both. However, let us follow the two through the years.

From 1499 to 1514.

From 1499 to 1505, there are no extant letters exchanged between the two men. After Erasmus' return to Paris he studied and wrote. From the inspiration of this English visit he wrote and published the Adagia which was enthusiastically received and won him immediate fame. During the next few years, he traveled through France and Holland but, as he journeyed, he studied Greek assiduously.

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1 Erasmus, Epistle 108.

"I have given myself up entirely to Greek; and as quickly as I get any money I shall first buy Greek authors and after that clothes."[1] In the summer of 1501, he met Jean Vitrier who, with Colet, was to become one of the outstanding friends of his life.. Louvain was his home for about two years. While in the Netherlands, he wrote the Enchiridion, and with his usual love of adding interest, he tells that a woman whose husband was hot-tempered and dissipated asked him to write it for his reform.

In the Enchiridion or The Handbook of the Christian Knight his "philosophy of Christ" as he loved to call it, is given complete and rounded expression. Later in 1501, he writes to a friend,"Here are my plans for the future. At times I think of visiting England again, in order to spend a month or two with Colet in studying the higher theology; for I am well aware how profitable it might be for me."[2] During the days in Louvain, Erasmus uncovered an old manuscript written by Laurentius Valla containing his annotations on the New Testament. The Dutch scholar was immediately interested and, after a close study of the work, Erasmus published his translation of Valla's Annotations on the New Testament. It was a courageous piece of work for Erasmus well knew the immediate enmity it would call forth.

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1 Erasmus; Letter to James Batt.
2 Erasmus, Epistle 159.

This particular study is interesting for it increased his interest in the New Testament and led to a later translation from the Greek original. Thus, Erasmus had definitely started on his path of religious literature. His restless life was still restless in appearance, yet his writings betoken a steady stream underlying his ceaseless activity. Each year's work better prepared him for his task.

Colet, in the interval, stayed at Oxford lecturing on the Scriptures. He received no degrees nor recognition of especial distinction, yet this mattered little. However, the leaven was working and students were more and more studying the Scriptures rather than the commentaries and dogmas of the schoolmen. Letters from students during this period indicate the influence of Colet upon their thought.

It may easily have been that the study of Valla "brought Colet clearly to Erasmus' mind since he had left Colet immersed in similar work on his departure from England."[1] In 1505 Erasmus wrote to Colet for the first time in five years.

> "Had our friendship arisen from ordinary causes, or had your character ever seemed to smack of the commonplace, I should have had much reason to fear that our mutual regard, after so long an interval of time and separation of space, might at least have grown cold, if it had not died out entirely. But since my admiration for

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1 Mangan, J. J. Life, Character, and Influence of Erasmus, p.198,I

> your singular attainments and my love for your upright character have attached me to you, and the hope, or rather the fancy, that I possess the same qualities have attached you to me, I do not think I need fear that which often happens, that being out of your sight I should also be absent from your mind....I am surprised that none of your commentaries on Paul and the Gospels has yet been published. I am well awareof your modesty; still it should be overcomeand banished out of regard for the public good....I cannot well express to you, dearest Colet, with what energy I am giving myselt to theology, how everything that calls me away, or even hinders me from it is disgusting to me. But the frowns of fortune, who ever looks at me askance, have been the reason for my inability to extricate myself from my present kind of trumpery effusions...It was with this ideathat I went to France, so that if I were able to finish them I could certainly throw them aside by some means or other. Then freely and heartily I could apply myself to theology with the purpose of spending the rest of my life therein."

He further states that he is sending copies of the Enchiridion and the Panegyric in order that his friend might see the results of his years' work.

> "One thing I do see plainly, that without Greek we amount to nothing in any sort of literature. For it is one thing to conjecture, another thing to be certain; one thing to see with your own eyes, another to trust to those of other people".[1]

The reply to this letter is lost, but evidently it was so favorable that Erasmus immediately started for England, for the summer of 1505 found him in London.

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1 Erasmus, Ep. 181

During this second visit to England, Erasmus made new friends but kept in constant touch with the old. He felt it might be possible to gain some church benefices in England or patrons for his further study. Here in England, Erasmus was offered the opportunity of taking the long coveted trip to Italy, in company with the sons of the King's physician, John Baptista Boeria. On Erasmus' return to Paris, he wrote a short letter to John Colet expressing his sorrow in leaving England but promising to return in the near future.

It is not necessary to follow Erasmus in his Italian journey. Suffice it to say that he received his doctor's degree in theology at the University of Turin, visited Rome and there made many friends. In the year 1509, Henry VIII ascended the English throne and immediately Lord Mountjoy urged Erasmus to return, promising him a benefice. Nor is it necessary to dwell on a discussion of The Praise of Folly which came into evidence just after his arrival in England when he visited Thomas More. It seems never to have been mentioned between Colet and Erasmus, perhaps both evaded a subject of disagreement.

Erasmus arrived in England to stay for several years. In November of 1509 he accepted a position to teach at Cambridge and stayed there, except for a short visit to London,

for the next two years. During these years, the friendship of the two men was deepened by conversations, dinners, and letters. The bond was greatly increased now that Erasmus and Colet were working toward the same end - to turn men back to the Scriptures.

In 1504, Colethad become the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, a position of high honor. There, he had carried on his life as before - ever the ascetic and religious devotee. His simple habit of dark wool was not exchanged for the scarlet robes of a Church prelate nor was his manner of living varied. He instituted several reforms within the Cathedral and there continued to expound the Scriptures and their practical value for life.

In 1510, he founded St. Paul's School which was destined to be one of the outstanding schools of England. The considerable fortune inherited from his father was used to establish this school "especially to increase knowledge and worshipping of God and our Lord Jesus Christ and the good Christian life and manners in the children." He combined the humanities with religious life. "The intention summarizes the man, with his Erasmus-like zeal for learning and his Savonarola zeal for religion."[1]

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1 Dark, Sidney Five Deans, p. 39.

It requires too much space to fully cover the correspondence between Colet and Erasmus about the school at St. Paul's. The two men cooperated in the educational activity of the school, Erasmus suggesting teachers and ideals. It is quite in evidence that Erasmus gained many of his educational ideals from association with Colet in this school work. "Such a wonderful example of loving devotion to the education of youth as Colet was then furnishing to the world could not fail to be observed by Erasmus; and to his knowledge of the aims and motives of Colet we owe the thoughtful and discriminating sketch of him."[1]

On February 6, 1512, Colet was called upon to preach to a Convocation of ecclesiastics called together to discuss ways of extirpating heresy. Colet was already known for his outspoken views and for his hatred of the abuses of the Church. It was, therefore, doubly daring for the Dean of St. Paul's to tell the heads of the Church in England that before they could stamp out heresy they must stamp out the heresy within their own souls. He defined the evils of the clergy and insisted that a reformation was needed:

> "But this reformation and restoration in ecclesiastical affairs must needs begin with you, our fathers, and then afterwards descend upon us your priests and the whole clergy. You are our chiefs - you are our examples of life."[2]

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1 Mangan, J. J. Life, Character, and Influence of Erasmus, p. 327
2 Colet, John Convocation Sermon, 1512, quoted from Seebohm, F. The Oxford Reformers, p. 148.

From that day, Colet was a marked man. Churchmen in London endeavored to have him tried for heresy and complained of him to the King. Later, when King Henry VIII was preparing for war, Dean Colet, always a lover of peace, preached against war-even daring to do so before the King. He was called into conference with the King and much to the amamzement of his enemies, as they came out of the garden in which they had been talking, the King said: Let every man have his own doctor, and every one follow his liking; but this is the doctor for me."

"And so," concludes Erasmus in his Lives of Vitrier and Colet "certain wolves departed, open-mouthed, as the saying is". A letter from Erasmus in 1513 indicates more of the harassment that was beginning to surround Dean Colet:

> "The end of your letter grieved me, for you write that you are more harassed than usual by the troubles of business..What if you extricate yourself from it! ..Perhaps it might be better to give in, rather than to purchase victory at so great a cost. For peace of mind is worth a great deal... Wrap yourself up in Christ and in him alone, and this entangled world will disturb you less."[1]

If Erasmus and Colet really took the journey to the shrine of Thomas-a-Becket, it would have been during these years. There is some discussion upon this journey which he describes in The Colloquies some years later, using a fictitious name.

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1 Erasmus Letter to Colet, July 11, 1513.

It is generally believed that the name is symbolic of John Colet. Yet it is scarcely possible that Colet should so ridicule the rites and ideals of the Church. However, if the journey were really taken, it is but another link to add to their friendship.

For about two years of this stay, Erasmus was in Cambridge. He does not appear to have been particularly happy during these years, yet, with his nature, he was really never happy no matter where his habitat. He lived greatly to himself, working and writing, occasionally coming out for a lecutre, but,for the most part staying in his small room working upon manuscripts.

During these years, it is possible that he began work on his New Testament although it was not published for several years. "He was again in touch with Colet and under the influence of his earnest and zealous spirituality"[1] suggests Mangan as the basis for his writings done in Cambridge. The idea had perhaps suggested itself as he poured over the pages of Valla's Annotations on the New Testament or it may easily have been suggested by John Colet. In the autumn of 1512, Erasmus had written to Peter Gilles stating that he was at work on the correction of the New Testament manuscript and on the Epistles

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1 Mangan, J. J. Life, Character and Influence of Erasmus, p. 327.

of St. Jerome. The New Testament was undoubtedly to be "opus magnum" by which he aimed to show the world both his scholarship and his zeal for religion. Other works were written during these years but most of them with the definite purpose in mind, to gain money by dedications.

After five years in England, of intimacy with Colet, More, and his other friends, Erasmus returned to Paris and Basle.

From 1514-1519. For the next five years of Colet's life, the friendship between the two men was kept alive through correspondence thought it is possible they met on several of Erasmus' flying visits to England in 1515, 1516, 1517.

Just as Erasmus left England in 1514, he received a letter from the Prior of the monastery at Steyn suggesting that he return to the cloister. Again, the heavy hand of the Order was over his head to take away his freedom. Erasmus, in a long and interesting letter, relates the story of his life, emphasizing the high esteem in which his English friends hold him and of the love Colet has for him. He insists that the monastic life is not his way of life although he is devoting his life to sacred literature. After leaving Paris,

he traveled through the Low Countries by the Sea. In Ghent, Antwerp, Louvain, he was lauded for his ability and genius. In Mainz, "much was made of him"[1] as in Strassburg. The cities of the Rhine lionized him, naming him "the ornament of Germany".

In the middle of 1514, Erasmus arrived in Basle to spend most of his time in that city until 1516. It was a town famous for its printers, John Amerbach and John Froben. The latter was the attraction for Erasmus. A friendship sprang up between the two men and from then until the death of Froben, they were co-partners in an immensity of work. A group of younger men worked with Erasmus in agreeable companionship. Henry Glarean,one of the younger group of scholars wrote to Erasmus:

> "Besides innumerable other benefits you conferred on me, the chief is this, that you taught me to know Christ and not only to know him but to imitate, to reverence, and to love him."[2]

Colet, during these years was hard-pressed on all sides. A letter to Erasmus in 1514 indicates that he is weary of the world:

> "I am rejoiced that we know where you are, and under what sky you live, and I am also rejoiced to know that you are well. See to it that you perform your vow to St. Paul that you told me about...Daily, I meditate on my retreat and retirement with the Carthusians..

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1 Erasmus, Letter to Colet
2 Erasmus, Ep. 463.

> "My nest there is almost finished. When you return to us you will find me there, dead to the world, as far as I can see. Take care of your health and let us know whither you betake yourself."[1]

His years at St. Paul's had taken much out of him. There had been the constant wrangling with the Bishop of London; there had been the organizing and stabilizing the St. Paul's School; he had been misrepresented to the king - and all things added to his dissatisfaction with worldly life. In the Carthusian monastery at Shene, Colet evidently had found the primitive strictness and devotion that he sought and, from this letter, suggests that he was already building a place there where he might live alone. Yet, for some reason, Colet never retired to the monastery although he may have stayed there for a short time. The election of Wolsey, who was also a lover of learning, plus the edition of the Utopia by Thomas More and the New Testament by Erasmus may have served to brighten his spirits and make him desire to live in the world for a few more years.

After six months in Basle, Erasmus departed suddenly for England to stay for a short time only. During this visit, he writes flattering letters to Cardinals in Rome and to Pope Leo about his work, his friends in England, and finally concludes by saying that England was his adopted

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1 Colet. Letter to Erasmus, London, October 20, 1514.

country and the chosen home of his old age. It is possible that this visit was for the purpose of securing a copy of a translation of the New Testament that he had left in England.

In February 1516, the New Testament was published by Erasmus with Greek and Latin columns side by side. It was accepted with varied comments. We are particularly interested in what John Colet felt about this edition of the New Testament.

> "I understand what you say in your letter about the New Testament". he writes."The copies of your edition are eagerly bought and everywhere read in this country. Many approve and admire your work; some also disapprove and carp at it..but these latter are men whose praise is blame and whose blame is praise. For my part, I love your work, and welcome this edition of yours. Do not stop, Erasmus, but, now that you have given us a better Latin version of the New Testament, illustrate it also with expositions and full commentaries on the Gospels. Length with you is brevity...If you unlock the meaning - as none can do better than yourself - you will confer a great benefit on the lovers of Scripture and will immortalize your name. Immortalize did I say? The name of Erasmus will never perish; but, besides bringing eternal glory on your name you will now, in toiling for Jesus, win for yourself life everlasting."1

We do not need to enter into the discussion of the quarrels that rose over the New Testement edition. It immediately

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1 Erasmus Epistle 423.

called forth the ecclesiastical thunder round Erasmus' head. It contained many startling ideas to the scholastically-minded clergymen. The emphasis was placed on the practical application of the Scriptures rather than on dogmatic controversies. His commentaries pointed out the abuses of the present day church. Erasmus made, as far as it was possible for him to make, a critical examination of the Scriptures. He discriminated between the "Old Testament where truth is sometimes covered up in apparently indecent and silly fables" and the "New, where all is clear, plain truth and where nothing savors of superstitution and cruelty but all is simplicity and gentleness."[1] The purpose of Christianity was to show love embodied in the person of Jesus and enshrined in the New Testament. Thus, he was giving Christ to the people. The Scriptures of the Church had been based on the Latin Vulgate. To question this, as did Erasmus in his return to the Greek, was to doubt the foundations of the Church.

The Paraclesis, prefixed to the New Testament includes many phrases and sentences that breathe of John Colet.

> "only bring a pious and open heart, imbued above all things with a pure and simple faith".
> "I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey".

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1 Erasmus Ecclesiastes 1535.

> "We are engaged in a holy occupation, and in one which commends itself to the world by its especial purity and simplicity."

The New Testament was translated into many languages and became immensely popular. Its merit is questioned by many, for the Greek is not perfect; in fact, Erasmus re-translated several verses of Revelations from the Latin into the Greek. Yet, at that time, manuscripts were difficult to find and errors were very possible. Its most important work was to be "the fountain source from which flowed the new translations into the vernaculars which like rivers irrigated the dry lands of the medieval Church and made them blossom into a more enlightened and lovely form of religion."[1]

From the time of the publication of the New Testament, Erasmus' life work was to edit and translate theological and religious writings. One follows the other in quick succession.

From 1516 to 1519, Erasmus' life was "a pilgrimage from one library to another." He was a man of fame and genius and many countries hastened to do him honor. There came tempting offers from France, from Spain, and from Saxony. But, Erasmus, always the free lance, did not accept any but kept all his strings on his bow at the same time. His last two visits to England were short ones made in 1516 and 1517.

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1 Smith, Preserved Erasmus, p. 183.

During his short sojourn there, he saw Colet, More, and his other friends but his main purpose in going to England was to negotiate for a dispensation to hold Church benefices. Ten years before that time, he had gained such a dispensation from Julian II but, for some reason, he felt it necessary to receive another. In 1516 negotiations were started and in 1517 Erasmus returned again to England, where, on April 9th he was granted full absolution from his illegitimate birth and granted permission to hold any Church benefices. He traveled through Germany and the Netherlands, finally settling in 1517 at Louvain. The fame of the Praise of Folly, the Adagia, the Enchiridion, and the New Testament followed him everywhere. During these years, his correspondence increased immensely and the world was his! His work never ceased. He not only was constantly energetic at his own work but he inspired others to larger tasks of writing. After 1517, the "tragedy of Luther" loomed upon the horizon. It is not our purpose to stop to survey the position of Erasmus in the beginning of this crisis of Reformation.

Colet, in the interval of years, had rapidly failed in health. In the spring of 1517, he preached the Lenten services before the King for the last time. He had, for some time, been subject to attacks of inflammatory fever

and the third attack, Erasmus says, caused his death. After the Lenten Service in 1517, there are only a very few letters by which we may trace the movements of Colet. One of these is to Erasmus, although it is certain many must have been exchanged between the two during these last years of Colet's life. Erasmus sent to him a 1517 edition of the New Testament and a copy of Luther's Theses. This last letter to Erasmus is indicative of the Christian humility, the candour, and the charm of John Colet.

> "I am half angry with you, Erasmus, for sending greetings to me in letters written to others, and not to myself. For, though, I have no mistrust of our friendship, yet this indirect greetin, in letters to other people, make others conclude that you are not so attached to me as you really are....Erasmus! Of books and knowledge there is no end. But for this short life there is nothing better than that we should live in purity and holiness, and daily endeavor to be purified and enlightened and fulfil what is promised in these Pythagorean and Cabalistic treatises of Reuchlin. This result, in my judgment, we shall attain by no other way, than by an ardent love and imitation of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, leaving detours, let us take a short road to attain it quickly. I would fain do so to the best of my power. Farewell!"1

It is evident that the last two years of Colet's life were spent in illness. In the summer of 1519, he visited Oxford but, after this excursion, he failed rapidly. On the

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1 Colet. Letter to Erasmus, 1517.

twenty-second of August 1519, John Colet made his will and on the sixteenth day of September 1519, he died. Thus died one "whose only care was to run in the path of Christ"[1], and one "whose name you would not hesitate to inscribe in the roll of the saints"[2].

To Erasmus, the news of Colet's death came as a great shock. His letters are overflowing with his sorrow at the loss of such a dear friend. In a letter to the Bishop of Rochester he writes:

> "Thus far have I written, grieving for the death of Colet; a death so bitter to me that the loss of no one for the last thirty years has afflicted me more. I know that it is well with him, who has been taken from this wicked and troublesome world, and is enjoying the presence of his Christ, whom in his lifetime he so dearly loved. In the public interst I cannot but lament the loss of so rare a pattern of Christian piety, so unique a preacher ofChristian doctrine. And on my own private account I lament so constant a friend, so matchless a patron. For what alone remains, in lieu of funeral obsequies, this duty I will discharge for him; if my writings areof any avail, I will not suffer the memory of such a man to die out among posterity."[1]

And so, we leave Erasmus, bereaved over the loss of so great a friend. His work continues unceasingly until his death in 1536. But life from 1519 on was to be a constant

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1 Dark, Sidney Five Deans, p. 52.
2 Erasmus. Letter to Justas Jonas.
3 Erasmus, Epistle 1030.

warring to one who desired only a life of peace and study. He was to be pulled in opposite directions by both Catholics and Protestants, to be despised by members of both forces for keeping "au dessus de la mélee".[1]

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1 Smith, Preserved Erasmus, p. 439.

CHAPTER V.

LINES OF INFLUENCE.

General Influences.

We have scanned the lives of the two friends - Colet of England and Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam - to the time of the death of the former in 1519. More things are conspicuous by their absence than by their presence in this suvey, for it has been necessary to omit much material that does not directly pertain to the acquaintance of the two men. It is our purpose, in this concluding chapter, to trace the influence of John Colet upon Erasmus.

There are few men who are not influenced by the friendship of another person. Man is so constituted that fellowship is essential and a natural consequence of this fellowship is that each participant is influenced. Erasmus, in this respect, was more susceptible than many men. Although he was always a lover of peace and solitude, he cared much for the opinions of other people. He desired friends and was easily changed by association with them. It is only natural, therefore, that his friendship with John Colet should exert some influence in his life as their friendship grew in strength.

In 1518, Marquard von Hatstein wrote to Colet:

> "With a skill like that with which Homer published the prasies of Achilles, Erasmus has studiously held up to the admiration of the world and of posterity the name of England, and especially of Colet, whom he has so described that there is not a good man of any nation who does not honor you.

> "I seem to myself to see that each of you owes much to the other, but which of the two owes most to the other I am doubtful. For he must have received good from you; seeing you are hardly likely to have been magnified by his colouring pen. You, however, if I may freely say what I think, do seem to owe some thanks to him for making publicly known those virtues which before were unknown to us."[1]

As this quotation indicates, there was a reciprocal influence between the two men but we must, of necessity, narrow our range to the influence of John Colet upon Erasmus.

When the two met in England in 1499, through the first exchange of letters, a seed of friendship was planted that was to blossom throughout the years. Very different in character, yet they found much in common. This community of feeling increased as the years went by. It is, perhaps, too much to say that Colet may be put in the category of the "best" friends of Erasmus where Seebohm places him, yet certain is it that Erasmus considered him to be one of his closest and most loving friends and one who had greatly influenced his life.

As we see it, the influence of Colet upon Erasmus was of two kinds - direct and indirect. The first may be definitely traced and are the outstanding ones suggested by biographers of Erasmus. The latter are of a more conjectural

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1 Quoted from Dark, Sidney Five Deans, p. 53.

type which suggested themselves as the author read Erasmian literature. If it were possible to quote at great length from Erasmus' correspondence and writings, these influences might be more clearly seen. In this short space, however, we must confine ourselves to selected quotations in tracing lines of influence.

Influence Upon Vocation. The first and the almost universally acknowledged influence of Colet upon Erasmus is that of suggesting to him a new vision for his life work. With a very few exceptions, all biographers of Erasmus accept the belief that John Colet exerted a strong influence upon Erasmus in turning him from strictly humanistic studies to theological interests. It may be too strongly emphasized yet, from evidences that may be secured, Colet guided Erasmus in his final vocational choice.

When Erasmus appeared in England he was, to all appearances, still the literary dilettante. It is true that he had written a letter to Prior Servatius from Paris suggesting his strong interest in theological studies. Was not this, however, the attitude that was expected of him when he had left the monastery at Steyn for the express purpose of studying theology?

Underneath the ecclesiastical exterior was the desire for classical learning which had early become an obsession

and most of his time in Paris was spent in the pursuit of humanism. He attended lectures in theology and received a Bachelor's degree in theology, but his letters ridicule his teachers and the Scotists of the University. This, of course, might be expected of any young college student, yet the very fact that he did not receive his doctor's in theology after so many years of study in Paris is indicative of his lagging desire. In Paris, he had gained some fame as a scholar, yet he had published only a few poems and had written a preface to Gaguin's History of France. He was dabbling in the humanities, undecided about his final profession - with one desire only, to travel in Italy. Circumstances did not permit this journey; an invitation to England came at the right moment and he accepted.

In England he met John Colet, a man of his own age, who was already on the highway of his chosen vocation. He had travelled in Italy, studied widely, knew the ancient classics and had a strong bent in humanistic learning, yet all of his knowledge was used to enlarge the dominating motive of his character - a belief in a practical Christian life. In Oxford, he was lecturing on the Epistles of St. Paul and endeavoring to understand them in their own background.

He believed that man needed to return to the Scriptures as the basis of his life and that all learning should be directed to this goal. He exhorted his students to "keep to the Bible, and the Apostle's Creed and let the divines, if they like, dispute about the rest."

To Erasmus this man must have presented a new ideal. He had been seeking a way to use his learning and in Colet there was portrayed a man who had found a way. Erasmus, fascinated by the suggestion of combining the classics with Christianity, discussed eagerly with Colet in order to find his deeper convictions. We have already spoken of the letters exchanged between the two when Colet offered Erasmus the opportunity of staying in Oxford to expound the Old Testament as he was lecturing on the Epistles. One sentence in Erasmus' answer stands out as significant in our present view:-

> "Nay, more, as soon as I feel conscious of having the strength and the requisite ability, I will come to your aid and assist you to the best of my powers in defending true theology."[1]

Erasmus left Oxford after refusing Colet's invitation, yet he did not forget the promise in the following years. "Erasmus saw that if the Scriptures were to be treated historically, they must be studied in their original form, or in the nearest form to that which critical scholarship could discover."[2]

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1 Erasmus Epistle 108.
2 Allen, P. S. Erasmus' Services to Learning, p. 9.

His letters, immediately after his return to France, suggest this desire to go to the root of the sources but speak of his feeling that he needs equipment in order to fulfill the purpose. During the next five years, Erasmus centers his life around that promise. He becomes a devotee of Greek studies and accepts every opportunity to enlarge his learning. At the end of five years, he renews relations with Colet: "My wings are spread, and I am hastening after sacred learning as fast as the winds will carry me. I long to be at work upon it and to throw aside the worldly tasks in which I am still involved. Soon I hope to extricate myself."[1] After the translation of Valla's Annotations on the New Testament Erasmus' work in the theological field, took definite form and continued unceaselessly until his death in 1536. We maintain that it was John Colet who, upon Erasmus' first visit to England, suggested to him the possibility of using his learning and abilities for a Christian end.

It should be said, at this point, that Erasmus may easily have gained his interest in religion from the School in Deventer under the influence of the Brethren of the Common Life. Albert Hyma in his book, "The Christian Renaissance" devotes a section to the strong influence of the Brethren upon

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1 Erasmus Epistle 181 Freely translated by Sidney Dark, Five Deans.

the vocation of Erasmus. It is noticeable, however, that in a later book in which Mr. Hyma makes an analytic study of the youth of Erasmus, he suggests:

> "It is hoped that the present study may lead to a more scientific analysis of the mind of Erasmus just before he met the Dean of St. Paul's and other great and noble men. Perhaps it will be seen that what these men did for Erasmus was not so much to instill new views into his mind as to resurrect dead ideals formulated long ago but starved to death by improper care."[1]

It well may be that the seed was planted by the Brethren in the early life of Erasmus. However, it still remains true that John Colet influenced Erasmus in his vocation, whether he gave to him a new ideal or revived a starved one.

Influence Upon Writings

It is quite evident that the project of the New Testament had been contemplated for some time before its appearance in 1516, perhaps even from the time of the first visit to England in 1499. "It was probably at the instigation of Colet that Erasmus began an original Latin version of the New Testament" states Preserved Smith.[2] Evidences suggest that Colet not only suggested an edition of the New Testament but furnished him with manuscripts from the library of St. Paul's Cathedral. Thus, Colet not only turned Erasmus aside from the humanistic trend to a life of

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1 Hyma, Albert The Youth of Erasmus, p. 219.
2 Smith, Preserved Erasmus, p. 162.

devotion to sacred literature, but he, also, made very definite suggestions for the carrying on of his work. This is quite clearly pointed out in the letter in which Colet praises the work done on the New Testament:

> "I am looking out for your Jerome who will owemuch to you and so shall we, also, when able to read him with your corrections and explanations..Go on, Erasmus....You will confer a great boon upon those who delight to read your writings if you will explain the meaning of the Gospels which no one can do better than you."[1]

The Paraphrases suggested in this letter were issed by Erasmus and were accepted, as Colet prophesied they would be, with great popularity. We believe, therefore, that John Colet was the inspiration of Erasmus' desire to edit some of the ancient Church writings and that he made definite suggestions, from time to time, for the work of Erasmus. His constant encouragement and interest must have stimulated Erasmus on to greater heights.

In 1510 John Colet had founded St. Paul's School and called upon Erasmus for his suggestions as to requirements for teachers, text-books, and other school matters. Erasmus replied in the form of a letter De Studii in which he stated: "I want the teacher to have traversed the whole range of knowledge, that it may spare each of his scholars doing it." This letter

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1 Erasmus, Ep. 483.

became a basis for his later educational writings. De Copia Verborum was written for the St. Paul's School and proved to be a valuable textbook. A grammar was composed jointly by Erasmus and Lily for Colet's School which was later known as Lily's Grammar and became the standard Latin grammar for centuries. Many of the ideas in his later educational writings had their foundation in this early association with Colet in planning for St. Paul's School. "That wise man" he later writes, "saw that the main hope of the state was in good primary education."[1] Thus, textbooks were written by Erasmus for Colet's use in the school and the foundations were laid for his future educational writings.

Indirect Influence Upon His Mind

Another influence upon Erasmus is an intellectual one. This, of course, is really in line with the vocational influence yet it is of such importance that it needs special emphasis. We have suggested the course of the conversation over Thomas Aquinas and the Schoolmen which Colet and Erasmus had in Oxford in 1499. Though Erasmus disliked the scholastic philosophy of the Scotists, he was still somewhat under the thraldom of Aquinas. When Colet answered his defense with such vigor and dislike of Aquinas, Erasmus must have been deeply impressed by his sincerity. The assurance

with which Colet spoke made him search his own position. From Erasmus' later writings, it is evidenced that he studied Aquinas and came to Colet's conclusion. This attitude of mind was to greatly influence his ability to give a freer interpretation of the Scriptures for he was no longer bound to follow the Schoolmen. Colet helped him to see his way through the fog of scholastic disputation, which he was already doubting, to a clearer interpretation of the background of the Bible. He was able to see the texts of the Scriptures not as dogmas but as practical wisdom. Once gaining this outlook, he hastened through years of preparation for his offering - the New Testament with commentaries of practical quality of the Sctiptures, the New Testament as the background of Christian life. Colet was able to stimulate him intellectually by teaching him to think for himself and to free himself from scholastic dogmatism.

Influence of Friendship

In 1499 when Erasmus arrived in England, he was a lonely foreign scholar of some reputation, yet poor, restless, undecided and disgruntled. To such a youth, John Colet, with fortune, reputation, and stability held out a hand of friendship. Erasmus was immediately pleased and accepted the friendship of such a man enthusiastically. Here, he met one who was his equal intellectually, if not his

superior, one with whom he might have a stimulating fellowship. Just the mere fact of having a friend who was particularly interested in his welfare and who believed in his ability meant much to Erasmus as he indicates in his life of John Colet, "Here I first began to know the man - for some god or other sent me thither." He was honored by the attention of a man with so high a reputation in the intellectual world. Colet had wealth, position, and means - all of which were foreign to Erasmus at that time. He was able to give financial aid and to introduce him to many friends at Oxford.

> "Still I fancy you are not the less victor in the matter of benefits conferred, since you have blessed Erasmus, a stranger to England, otherwise an incomparable man, with so many friends - Mountjoy, More, Linacre, Tunstal, etc."1

This statement is surely exaggerated for Erasmus and Mountjoy becamefriends before Colet appeared upon the horizon, yet, Colet was an influential man and would have introduced him to many of the ecclesiastical leaders. Letters of Erasmus suggest that Colet was the medium of acquaintance with several men of England who were later to help him.

It is difficult to evaluate a friendship. It is too personal and indefinite to be analyzed. On can judge from

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1 Letter to Colet from Marquard von Hatstein, 1518.

outer appearances only. The correspondence that passed between Colet and Erasmus up to 1519 indicates a strong bond of friendship and affection between them. In the letter to Servatius, Erasmus writes:

> "There is at London, Father John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, a man who combines with the highest learning the most admirable piety and whose influence is weighty with everyone. This man loves me so, as everybody knows, that with no one would he more willingly live than with myself;"[1]

It was only natural that Colet, with his faith in mankind, should believe in the abilities of Erasmus and always hold him to his best. John Colet was an intense personality, influencing all men with whom he came in contact. More, Lily, Erasmus, Lupset - all sang his praises. He became the "exemplar for life" of Erasmus. The influence of such a friendship may be over-emphasized, yet, in this particular case, Erasmus himself so often speaks of Colet as "my friend Colet" that he becomes the judge. We suggest That Erasmus' friendship with John Colet permeated his entire life; so much so, that at the death of Colet, Erasmus writes: "I seem as though only half of me were alive, Colet being dead. What a man has England and what a friend have I lost."[2]

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1 Erasmus Epistle 296.
2 Erasmus Letter to Richard Pace, 1519.

Influence Upon Character

The character of John Colet impressed itself upon Erasmus. In contrast to his own conflict of character, his egotism, his restlessness, he valued the calm, steady, unselfish character of Colet. In the 1499 letter he writes:

> "How shall I express how much, most noble Sir, I have been charmed and delighted by your placid, calm, and unaffected style, flowing from a most richly endowed mind as from a limpid fountains, so to speak; sustained, uniform, open, sincere, and full of moderation; at no time rough, strained, or confused; so that I seem to have recognized even in your letter the reflection of your mind? You say what you mean and you mean what you say. Your words, formed in the heart and not in the mouth, follow your wish naturally, not the wish the utterance."[1]

In his life of Colet, Erasmus describes with clarity and appreciation the sterling virtues, the asceticism, the abnegation of self, the love for the young, and the ability of the Dean of St. Paul's. All restless, unstable spirits need the ballast of a strong character nearby. The genius of Erasmus recognized the talent of Colet; the character of Erasmus recognized its need of the character of Colet. "Erasmus had an esteem and admiration for the character attainments of Colet and a sincere respect for his manly personality which was in many ways such a sharp contrast to his own."[2]

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1 Erasmus Epistle 107.
2 Mangan, J. J. Life, Character, and Influence of Erasmus, Vol. I, p. 96.

All of these rivulets of influence poured into the general stream of the life and character of Erasmus. One can scarcely be separated from the other; one seems quite conscious, another quite unconscious. The general fact, however, must be admitted by all observers that John Colet was of influence in the life of Erasmus. Through him, Erasmus first caught sight of a possible combination of religion and humanism; through him Erasmus envisioned the Bible as the center of all life; through him Erasmus gained personal stimulation and inspiration; and through him Erasmus found a living example of Christian devotion and piety.

SUMMARY BY CHAPTERS

Chapter I. The world at the time of Erasmus and Colet was one of constant change and chaos. Old social, economic, and religious ideals were breaking under the strain of the new spirit of the Renaissance. People everywhere were gaining new hope in their own abilities and were struggling toward freedom. The Church was in a state of disintegration, yet, among the clergy and monks there flickered a light of reformation and return to the primitive ideals of the Church. The State was restless and at war, yet, at the same time, striving for unity of its people. A new spirit permeated every department of man's life and people were awake to a new world.

Chapter II. Erasmus, born in Holland, about 1466 started his life under the cloud of illegitimacy. His early childhood, as he recalls it in later years, was one of gloom and discomfort. After school in Deventer and Bois-le-Duc, he entered a monastery at Steyn. There he had leisure to study the humanities but was eager, as the years went by, to get away from his monastic prison. After a short time with the Bishop of Cambrai, he went to Paris. There he studied theology, according to the desire of the superiors of his Order, but also became greatly interested in humanistic studies.

In Paris, his ever-restless spirit continued to be dissatisfied.

Chapter III. John Colet, born in England about 1467, started his life with every opportunity open to him. He left no record of his childhood and it is, therefore, necessary to suggest activities of these early years. After study at Oxford, with the theological profession as his goal, he left England to travel in Italy and France. His visit on the continent is a mystery, yet we surmise that he visited Florence, Rome, and Paris and there gained new visions of ideals to be followed throughout his life. After his return to England, Colet lectured on the Epistles of St. Paul in Oxford University urging a return to the original sources and a study of the Scriptures in their own background.

Chapter IV. In 1499 the two men met in England. Letters were exchanged, difficulties of Scriptural interpretation were discussed, and the friendship began on a firm basis of deep interests. Erasmus left England to return to the continent where he studied Greek and began his career of writing in theological fields. Colet became the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral and there carried on his preaching of a simple Christianity. Erasmus, in 1509, returned

to England and again the two friends met often. Colet had founded St. Paul's School and they worked together on the curriculum and organization of the humanistic school. In 1516, after his return to Basle, Erasmus published the New Testament and, from that time, devoted his life to sacred literature. He traveled through Germany and was everywhere received with praise, both for his writings and for his personal charm. During these years, he worked unceasingly upon sacred literature, editing the Epistles of Jerome and Paraphrases on the Gospels. Colet, in the meantime, had grown weary of cathedral duties and ecclesiastical wranglings and desired to retire from the world. The last few years were spent in illness. In 1519, when Erasmus was informed of Colet's death, he was overwhelmed with grief but continued in his theological writings amidst the storm and struggle that was to come.

Chapter V. The lines of influence of John Colet upon Erasmus are of two kinds - direct and indirect. The direct ones are three: First, John Colet influenced Erasmus to choose a vocation of devotion to sacred writings; Second, he not only suggested the possible path but constantly goaded Erasmus on to greater heights by suggesting valuable work to be done;

Third, the work at St. Paul's School with Colet became the basis for Eramus' educational writings and educational ideals. The indirect influences, more difficult to trace, are suggested to be those of friendship of congenial spirits, of attitudes of mind, and of character.

The outstanding fact must be admitted - that John Colet influenced Erasmus by suggesting the possible combination of humanism and religion, by interpreting the Bible as the basis for practical life; by personal stimulation and inspiration, and by furnishing an example of Christian devotion and piety.

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